



MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

BODY PIERCING AND TATTOOING PROHIBITED

Effective Date: August 18, 2011

Policy #: IC-17

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- I. PURPOSE:** To minimize risk of infection or other physical or emotional harm to patients from body piercing or tattooing during hospitalization.
- II. POLICY:** Hospital personnel will not arrange or assist patients in obtaining body piercings or tattoos. Every effort will be made to prevent or discourage patients from piercing or tattooing themselves or others. Staff will use various educational approaches to inform patients of the risks associated with these procedures and the reason for the prohibition.
- III. DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. Body Piercing – To have a body part pierced in order to have jewelry affixed to the body in the hole that is made.
 - B. Tattoo – The permanent insertion of ink or other pigments below the skin using a sharp instrument.
- IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

All Staff – are responsible for encouraging patient cooperation with the policy.
- V. PROCEDURE:**

Treatment teams will deny requests by patients to have body parts pierced. Patients will not routinely be permitted to access items that could be used for body piercing. The treatment team may consider removing existing jewelry from patients for safety reasons.

Treatment teams will deny requests for tattoos, unless clinically indicated to alter an existing tattoo that is deemed offensive and harmful to the individual's psychiatric or social functioning. Staff will try to restrict patient access to items that could be used by an individual for tattooing.

Patient education procedures will be utilized to inform patients of the risks of these procedures and the reason for the prohibition when indicated.

Tattoo removal procedures may be authorized when clinically indicated.

Montana State Hospital Policy and Procedure

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- VI. REFERENCES:** None
- VII. COLLABORATED WITH:** Medical Director, Infection Prevention Coordinating Group
- VIII. RESCISSIONS:** Policy #IC – 17, *Body Piercing and Tattooing Prohibited* dated May 2, 2008; Policy #IC-17, *Body Piercing and Tattooing Prohibited* dated May 2, 2005
- IX. DISTRIBUTION:** All hospital policy manuals
- X. ANNUAL REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION:** This policy is subject to annual review and authorization for use by either the Administrator or the Medical Director with written documentation of the review (Attachment B) per M.C.A. § 307-106-330.
- XI. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Infection Preventionist
- XII. ATTACHMENTS:** Risk Factors

_____/____/____
John W. Glueckert Date
Hospital Administrator

_____/____/____
Thomas Gray Date
Medical Director

Risk Factors

Tattoos breach the skin, which means that skin infections and other complications are possible. Specific risks include:

- **Allergic reactions.** Tattoo dyes — especially red dye — can cause allergic skin reactions, resulting in an itchy rash at the tattoo site. This may occur even years after you get the tattoo.
- **Skin infections.** Tattoos can lead to local bacterial infections, characterized by redness, swelling, pain and a pus-like drainage.
- **Other skin problems.** Sometimes bumps called granulomas form around tattoo ink — especially red ink. Tattooing can also lead to raised areas caused by an overgrowth of scar tissue (keloids).
- **Bloodborne diseases.** If the equipment used to create your tattoo is contaminated with infected blood, you can contract various bloodborne diseases, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C, tetanus and HIV — the virus that causes AIDS.
- **MRI complications.** Rarely, tattoos or permanent makeup may cause swelling or burning in the affected areas during magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) exams. In some cases — such as when a person with permanent eyeliner has an MRI of the eye — tattoo pigments may interfere with the quality of the image.